

A stylized yellow graphic on the left side of the cover. It features a tall, thin, triangular skyscraper-like shape with a vertical line running down its center. To the right of this shape is a large, solid yellow circle, resembling a sun or moon, which is partially obscured by the base of the skyscraper. The entire graphic is set against a dark teal background.

# AMERICAN ART TODAY

NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

PUBLISHED BY NATIONAL ART SOCIETY



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**16 REPRODUCTIONS  
IN FULL COLOR**

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# AMERICAN ART TODAY

The National Art Society is proud to present a group of fine color reproductions, so selected as to give a strictly contemporary viewpoint, as well as an accurate cross-section of American production in painting, particularly the contributions now being made by the American school.

It is not enough to say that these paintings have been chosen from every part of the country: Illinois, California, New York, Missouri, New Mexico, Colorado, Wisconsin, Georgia, Maine and Washington, D. C.—nor that they represent the most frequently used painting processes: oil, tempera and watercolor. Even though these facts are unquestionably true, it is more important to note that they have been selected with an eye to the various types of expression current in American painting today. Conservative or academic painting is represented by Harry Watrous' *Madonna and Child*. Middle-of-the-road production appears in the work of Eugene Speicher (*Red Moore, Hunter*) and advanced or "modern" expression is found in *Repose on a Balcony* by Bernard Karfiol.

All three of these works, let it be remembered, derive from the tradition of European art;—Watrous' from that of the Renaissance in its precise and sculpturesque modelling, with Speicher and Karfiol stemming from the painting of the second half of the nineteenth century in France.

Similarly, we should be aware of the fact that such painters as Waldo Peirce (*Breakfast in the Barn*) and Russell Cowles (*The Farmer and the Raincloud*) have also been affected by the painting of the latter part of the nineteenth century. But whereas Speicher has borrowed the naturalistic tradition of France in a moderate fashion and Karfiol its post-Impressionist tendency toward mild abstraction, Peirce and Cowles have absorbed the vigorous and plastic Impressionism of such a master as Renoir. Further, they have managed to turn their borrowings into a more specifically American direction. The sense of the frank and robust that has characterized our American art from its very beginnings is more than evident in the work of these two painters just as their subject matter shows the vigor and health we expect to find in the American scene.

Most of our paintings deal with concrete ideas and emotions derived from looking at the panorama of America; the rolling plains of the middle West, the rugged mountains of the far West, the simple beauty of New England—these are the themes of the American landscape painter. Such ideas and feelings have been expressed in the lyrical regional paintings of John E. Thompson (*Briscoe's Barn*), Lamar Dodd (*Copperhill*), Emil Ganso (*Winter Morning*), or Millard Sheets (*California*). The work of young men such as these, and most of them are young, shows that first rate American painting is now being produced in every part of the country and, interestingly enough, far from the large metropolitan centers, a condition that had not been evident until very recently.



But America is not only made up of the countryside of Georgia, California, Colorado or New York. It consists of countless thousands of small towns and villages, little main streets that sum up the entire character of provincial life in this country as we find it in Emil Holzhauer's beautiful watercolor, *Village Street, January*.

One of the most interesting and vital things found in this selection of American paintings is its interest in men and women at work, some seen in a relatively idealized fashion as in the powerfully composed *No More Mowing* by John De Martelly, and others of a more earthy character such as the *Potato Pickers* of Santos Zingale. The difference between two paintings of this type is found in the fact that De Martelly's reaction to Nature (like that of Russell Cowles and Waldo Peirce) is primarily personal and joyous in a very intense way, whereas the *Potato Pickers* are a much more sorrowful group of people who express not joy in Nature but the fact that they work hard and that life is by no means as pleasant as it might be.

Paintings such as the *Potato Pickers* or the *All Steamed Up* of Karl Mattern indicate that it is possible to paint the American scene without becoming either artificial or strained, that it is possible to produce a beautiful and moving picture involving the works and days of our countrymen without having to belabor the point. These paintings prove, moreover, that artists are beginning to concern themselves with vital problems such as the industrial worker or the homeless farmer, seen in the *Night Shift* of Ernest Fiene and the *Prairie Travellers* of Edward Millman. Certainly we cannot accuse the new generation of American painters of being hot-house artists completely divorced from life or entirely lost in the maze of metropolitan existence. The painters are coming out into the light of day, looking about them for fresh and stimulating subject matter that expresses the character of this country in the most sincere manner possible. It need not be pointed out that a large share of the credit for this change in attitude is due the government for its encouragement of art.

It is a noteworthy and characteristically American fact that the exhibition from which the sixteen paintings in this portfolio have been chosen was organized by artist juries in every part of the country, that everyone had the right to submit his work and that the painter was judged by a jury of his peers. If the names of many of the painters mentioned here seem unfamiliar, it is because they are new to the public—but so is the idea of democratically arranged exhibitions. That they are men of talent is evidenced by the fact that many of the original paintings have already been purchased by museums.

Apart from everything else, this exhibition of contemporary American art has succeeded in bringing forward a host of new names, talented men and women who may be said to represent not only American Art Today but the direction of the next generation as well.

Bernard Myers



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ALL STEAMED UP, oil, by KARL MATTERN, MISSOURI

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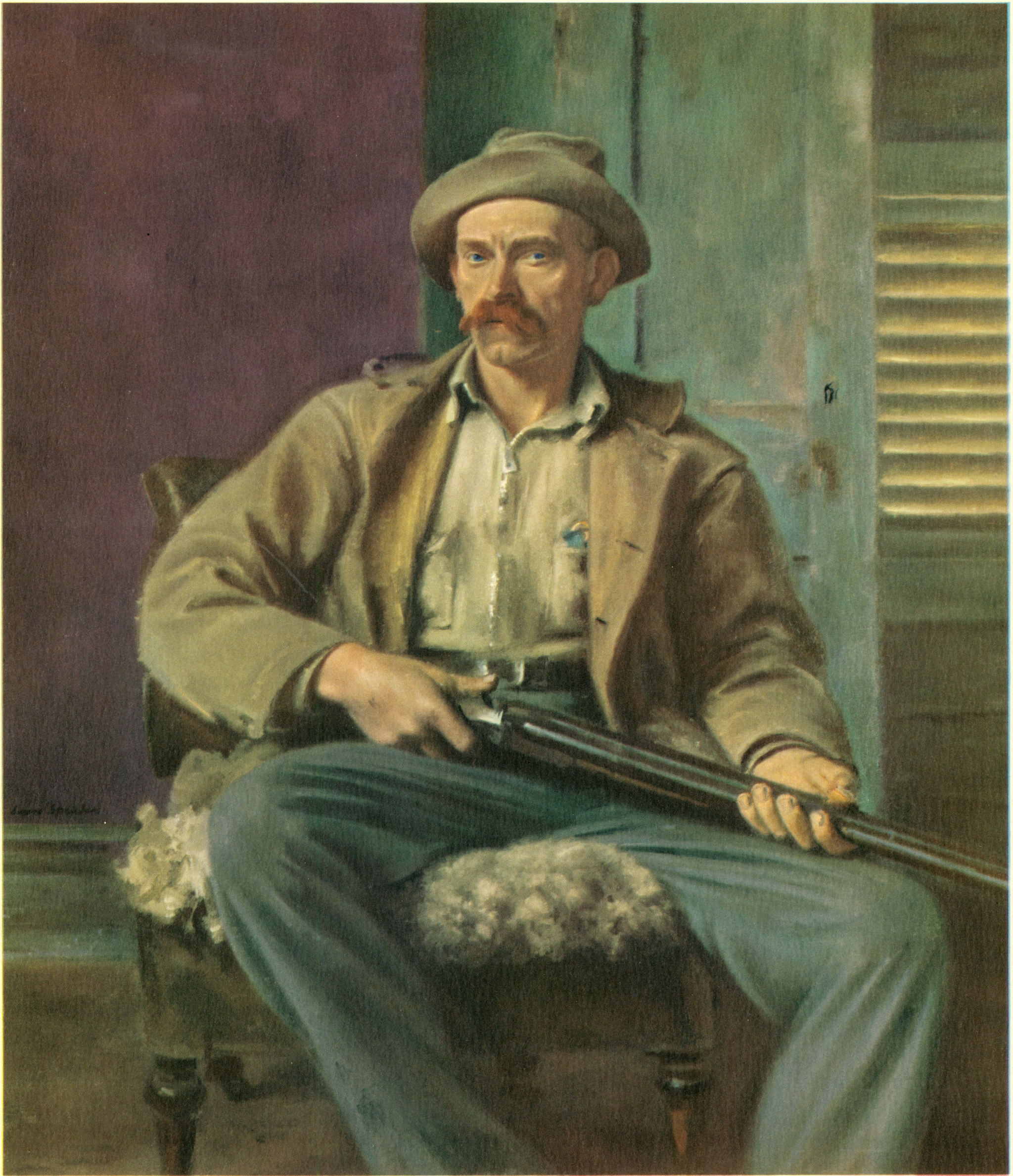


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FARMER AND THE RAINCLOUD, oil, by RUSSELL COWLES, NEW MEXICO

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NIGHT SHIFT, ALIQUIPPA, oil, by ERNEST FIENE, NEW YORK

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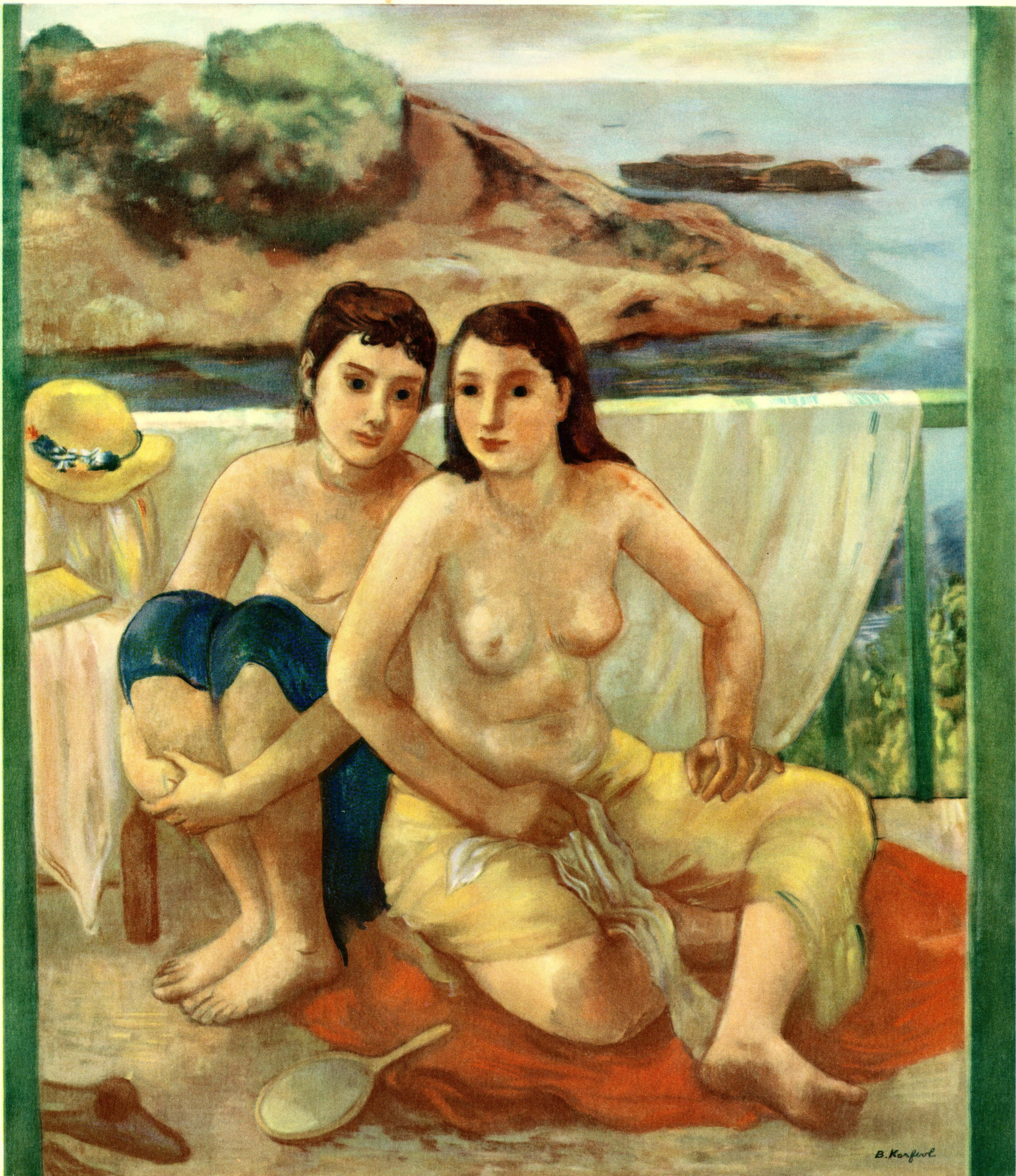
BREAKFAST IN THE BARN, oil, by WALDO PEIRCE, MAINE

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NO MORE MOWING, tempera, by JOHN S. DE MARTELLY, MISSOURI

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CHARLOTTE FROM VIRGINIA, oil, by NICOLAI CIKOVSKY, WASHINGTON, D. C.

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BRISCOE'S BARN, oil, by JOHN E. THOMPSON, COLORADO

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